

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
February 12, 2018**

PRESENT: Matthew M. Toolan, Chairman
Christopher J. Gerstel, Vice Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
David C. DiCicco, Member
Michelle S. Geddes, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

ABSENT: Robyn G. Fink, Assistant Director

GUESTS: Public Facilities-Construction: Steven Popper, Mike Retzky

Mr. Toolan called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM in the Charles River Room at PSAB. Mr. Toolan called for a moment of silence to think of all impacted by the weekend of tragic events in Needham.

- 1. Minutes of Meeting – January 22, 2018:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and was passed unanimously.
- 2. Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Representative Denise Garlick postponed her Report to the Community scheduled for this evening. The Town Manager will attend the Commission's 2/26 meeting. Mr. Gerstel reported on a recent meeting he had with Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen and Ms. Carey regarding the possible donation of a bubble over a synthetic field for winter use. The Farley Group provided information for the analysis, stating that a 10 foot perimeter is needed around the field. The monthly energy costs were estimated to be about \$10,000, and snow removal and maintenance was required. About 3 cargo containers are needed for storage out of season, preferably on site. As use would be limited to a synthetic turf field, DeFazio was the option reviewed. Placing a bubble on one field would impact the adjacent synthetic turf field, plus would be bounded by the rail road tracks, athletic field lights, Golf Course property and scoreboards and net posts between the field and McLeod diamond. The extra wear on the synthetic turf would decrease its lifespan. In order to cover costs, staff time would be needed to recruit users, as most Needham groups would have limited use except for weekends. The Commission's consensus was that the request was worthy of consideration, but due to its impact on the site, turf and Town staff, the Commission felt it was not a project to pursue at this time. Ms. Carey shared articles on temporary outdoor skating rinks and replacement of synthetic turf. Mr. DiCicco would like to have a small advisory committee formed to make recommendations to the Commission and Trustees, particularly related to new options for infill mix.

3. **Program Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Carey noted that the middle school early release trip to snow tube was coming up, and two additional Friday night trips to Boda Borg were being added.

4. **Discussion Items:**

- A. **Rosemary Recreation Complex:** discussed later in the meeting

- B. **Fee Assistance Policy:** The Commission continued their discussion about the current policy for offering fee assistance to Needham residents. Mr. DiCicco has gathered information on the policy used by Needham Community Education and noted that families gave different departments approval to review their financial information, including eligibility for free lunch. Ms. Carey isn't sure if departments outside of the School Department could actually have access to the information, and Mr. Toolan noted that the guidance counselors who write letters on behalf of families are able to use that information when determining which families receive letters to be sent to Park and Recreation. Families or individuals, including pre-school and senior citizens, would not have that information available as a pre-requisite. Mrs. Chaston noted that the greatest amount of use for fee assistance was for pool passes and attendance at the Summer Playground program. She was not concerned about the use of fee assistance at most programs, but felt that expensive programs should have limits. Mr. DiCicco shared that the pool appeared to have about 30% of members receiving assistance, where it is his understanding that most organizations have about 10% of membership receiving assistance. Mr. Toolan stated that the percentage for the new pool isn't known, and that it was hard to artificially create a percentage. If there is a need, and proper documents are submitted to the department, Mr. Toolan supports providing the financial assistance, under the current policy. Mrs. Chaston suggested setting a specific number of available scholarships for the pools. Mr. DiCicco supports the current policy as long as the letters come from professionals who are basing the request on financial details. He suggested seeing how the first year at Rosemary Recreation Complex goes with requests and reviewing the policy after the summer. Ms. Carey will find out from the School Department if Park and Recreation can be added to the check-list letter.

- A. **Rosemary Recreation Complex:** Mr. Toolan welcomed Public Facilities-Construction Director Steven Popper and Project Manager Mike Retzky. Mr. Popper explained that the project timeline is reviewed on a regular basis and it is currently showing the building completion at about July 5th. The goal remains to be completed prior to July 1st, and incentives have been provided to over-come schedule delays from weather and some of the initial challenges with the temporary dam and the change to the ballast system. Mr. Toolan asked if it was possible to occupy just the first floor and pools prior to the 2nd floor being finished. Mr. Popper explained that was being reviewed, but was not a simple request. Planning Board approval would be needed, and they typically require all paperwork, including as-builts, be submitted. The trades people would need to be CORI'd, would require lay-down space, and create noise. With more winter conditions possible, more information on finishing would be known likely in early April. Mr. Toolan noted that recruitment and hiring of staff is challenged without having a known

date, so options will be needed. Ms. Carey noted that some of the training can be done off-site, but specific training will need to be done at the new facility. Mr. Popper thought it was likely that the contractor could coordinate with the department, providing access for training. Mr. DiCicco asked about the change orders. Mr. Popper explained that some relate to unknown conditions, some are owner requests, and others are errors or omissions from the architects' design. Mrs. Chaston asked about the contingency. Mr. Popper said it was still sufficient, with regular updates on actual use of contingency plus anticipated costs. Mr. Toolan thanked Mr. Popper for sharing the challenges and for all the hard work pushing forward trying to meet the timeline. Mr. Retzky is also the project manager for the Memorial Park fieldhouse project. The design is under review by the Planning Board and there is a concern that there be sufficient contractor parking once school opens in September. The Trustees of Memorial Park may request use of the upper parking lot at Rosemary Recreation Complex after the pool season and prior to the opening in 2019 for a small number of contractor vehicles. The consensus was that the Commission would support the request. Mr. DiCicco suggested that color coded tags be given to approved vehicles. Returning to discussions on a possible delay at Rosemary, Mr. Toolan asked about program impact. Ms. Carey stated that Outdoor Living could start at Ridge Hill and then shift over to Rosemary. Swim Team could start at another site, possibly the YMCA, and then move to Rosemary. With a start date uncertain, Mrs. Geddes asked if the sale of season passes should be delayed. Ms. Carey noted that it would be hard to stop, with all the publicity and excitement. She suggested extending the super early bird rates if there was still uncertainty in April. Mr. Toolan suggested moving forward with the sale, but providing a statement that opening date could be early July with a hope to know a firmer date by April.

- C. Fee Discussion: Swim Lessons, Multi-Purpose Room:** Will be discussed at next meeting.
- D. FY'19 Operating and Capital Budgets:** All members of the Commission were at the recent budget review with the Finance Committee.
- E. CPC Proposals:** Mr. DiCicco will meet with the CPC to present the Commission's request for funding to demolish the buildings at the camp property trails.
- F. Lights Request – Needham Soccer Club:** Ms. Carey noted that the Soccer Club was requesting permission to have the lights on until 10 PM on the Friday and Saturday of the Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament. There have been no problems with this request in the past. By policy, the Commission reviews at one meeting and brings the request to the following meeting for final discussion and a vote. This issue will be on the next agenda as an action item.
- G. Spring/Summer Field Scheduling:** Most of the permits are in the computer, with just a few special events still to get approved.
- H. Review of Meeting with Selectmen:** Mr. Toolan noted that the Selectmen had interest in some form of outdoor skating at Greene's Field, but were not in agreement on whether it

should be winter-long or a short-term special activity. Mr. Toolan noted the recent discussion about AED's at athletic fields used by high school sports. The Selectmen will follow-through with other departments. Mr. Gerstel noted that a study is about to begin on the Ridge Hill and Nike site parcels and possible future uses.

- I. Town Building Projects:** Mr. DiCicco has been helping the Trustees of Memorial Park draft a policy for use of the new building. The project is before CPC for partial funding and Planning Board for a special permit. Mr. Toolan noted that the High School construction project begins this month and will impact traffic during school hours. It doesn't appear to impact use of athletic fields, but will be monitored. Ms. Carey noted that modular classrooms are under review at the Mitchell School, so she will monitor to see if there is impact on the athletic fields or playground.

5. Action Items:

- A. Special Event Request – Boys Lacrosse:** Ms. Carey noted that this was a similar request from prior years, but the format has changed, so that a Needham team is always playing. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request from Needham Boys Lacrosse to host Friday Night Lights games on Fridays at DeFazio from 6-9 PM from early April through mid-June. The motion was seconded Mr. Gerstel and was passed unanimously.
- B. Special Event Requests – 128 Lacrosse (2):** The Commission reviewed the annual request to host a youth lacrosse clinic. Ms. Carey noted there were no issues in prior years, and the clinic fee is charged. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of 128 Lacrosse for use of DeFazio to host a 3 day youth lacrosse clinic June 18-20 (raindates June 20-22). The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and was passed unanimously. The Commission reviewed the request for practices for the high school program sponsored by 128 Lacrosse. The dates do not conflict with Track Club use of fields. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of 128 Lacrosse for practices on Tuesday and Thursday nights at DeFazio in June and July. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and approved unanimously.
- C. Special Event Request – Bay State Football:** Ms. Carey noted this was an annual request and there were no conflicts or concerns. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of Bay State Football to offer a 3 day clinic at DeFazio on August 13, 14 and 15. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and was approved unanimously.
- D. Special Event Request – Needham Soccer Club:** Ms. Carey noted this was an annual request and there were no conflicts or concerns. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request of Needham Soccer Club to host two 4 day clinics at DeFazio from August 6-9, and August 13-16. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and was passed unanimously.
- E. Special Event Requests – Cub Scouts Pack 4 (2):** Mrs. Geddes made a motion to approve the request of Cub Scouts Pack 4 to host a Rocket Launch at Claxton Field on Saturday, March 24 with a raindate of April 7. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel

and was passed unanimously. Mrs. Geddes made a motion to approve the request of Cub Scouts Pack 4 to host a family barbecue at Claxton Field on Sunday, June 3 with a raindate of June 10. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and approved unanimously.

F. Fee Approval – Summer Swim Team: Ms. Carey recommended that discussion about the swim team be held at the next meeting, since the opening date is not known. She presented information on two special Friday night events for middle school. With some weather cancellations of TGIF, the Assistant Director is scheduling Friday night trips to Boda Borg, with 6th graders on one night, and 7th and 8th graders on a second night. This has been a popular early release day field trip. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the \$65 fee for the Friday Night Boda Borg trips for middle school students. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and was approved unanimously.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: Items from tonight's meeting will move forward to the next agenda, including CPC projects, discussions on fees, and the swim team. Mrs. Chaston will not be able to attend the 2/26 meeting. Mr. Gerstel asked for an outline of meeting dates through Town Meeting.

7. Adjournment of meeting: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and the meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director